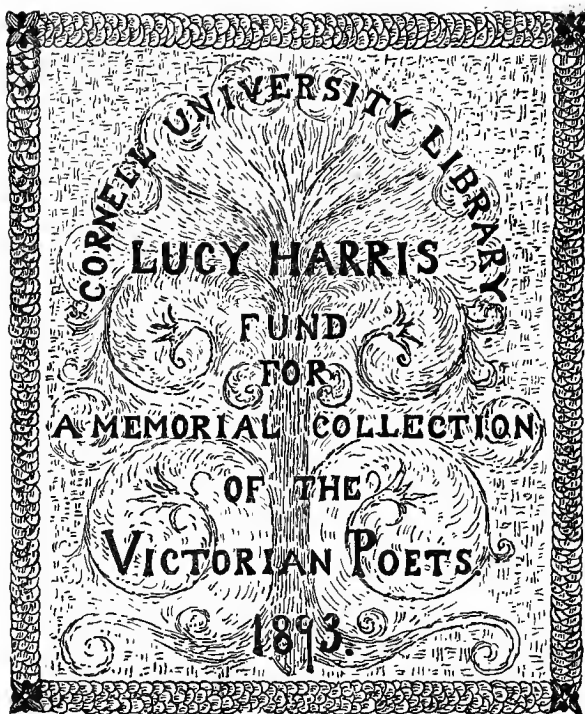


LINES
GRAVE & GAY

BY
W. ELDRED WARDE.





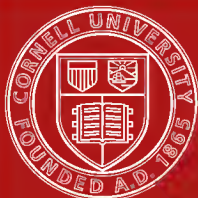
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LINES GRAVE AND GAY.

LINES
GRAVE AND GAY

BY

W. ELDRED WARDE.



LONDON :

*Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C.
Simpkin, Marshall & Co.; Hamilton, Adams & Co.*

New York : Scribner & Welford.

Did compass in his castle, and where great red deer
Would browse in all the pastures without fear,
And birds did sing in all the leafy groves,
Whilst the bright river wandered on below,
Still on, in ceaseless flowing to the sea.
It seemed, indeed, as if all things were his
Which man could want : peace from the outer world,
A sort of little Paradise on earth ; and yet,
Such is man's nature, Sir Rupert had one want—
A heart to love him ; and when Winter's hand
Had clothed the woods in annual snowy garb,
And the birds' songs were hushed, and round the place
The north wind moaned in melancholy mood,
He forth would ride on ever faithful steed,
In snow or tempest, till folks thought him odd,
And even whispered strangely of his mind.
It chanced that once, at least so stories say,
He turned his horse, one biting winter's day,

Down the long vista of some snow-capt trees,
Where all around was white ; and as thus silently
He rode, save for the crisp short steps
Which the good steed did make upon the ground,
A wailing cry broke thrice upon his ear ;
A cry so pitiful, and yet so sweet,
That thrilled him with desire to find it nigh.
And so it happened, that in drifts of snow,
So deep that they had almost done their work,
He came upon a little sweet-faced maid
Nigh unto death, save for his timely aid.
Scarce sixteen summers had passed o'er her head,
Her blue eyes, strangely bright, looked up at him
With such a depth of seeming trustfulness
That touched with interest his inmost soul,
And made him wonder, 'Can this be the heart
Which I have longed for all this weary time ?'
Straightway, in flights of idle Fancy flew

A.102951



Field & Tuer,
The Leadenhall Press, E.C.
T. 4,263.

PREFACE.



*C*OURTEOUS READER!—The under-quoted passage gives, in better language than anything I can say, the wish of your Author's heart.

—W. E. W.

BATH, 1885.

‘All is well. . . . If this suit be won.

That you express content.’—*King John*.

LINES GRAVE AND GAY.



THE LEGEND OF SIR RUPERT.



Introduction.

S*EE* where yon river runs beneath the wood,
Mark where the ruins are ; there once hath stood
A castle fair, whose outlines still do rise,
Like ancient emblems to the far-off skies.
Here is the courtyard gate, now crumbling fast,
Thro' which the busy throng hath ofttime passed ;
And there the dungeon where the prisoners lay,
All heedless of the passing light of day ;

Around the place stretch woods and meadows green,
Which once the scene of tournaments brave have been,
Whilst jackdaws build within the chapel wall,
And on its ruined aisle the rains do fall.

O ruthless hand of Time, thou hast been here !
Hushed is the castle bell, which once so clear
With lusty tongue proclaimed the passing hours,
Thro' hall and chantry of these stately towers ;
Gone is the pageant of the days of yore,
When mailed knights bestrode the polished floor,
Gone are the voices of the faithful hounds,
Gone are life's scenes, its sorrows, and its sounds—
All these have passed ; while still thy tireless feet
Press on unto the end which all must meet.
There is a curse about the place, 'tis said,
And country folks approach its towers with dread ;
For in the darkest hours a cry is heard,
Which even stills the voice of that strange bird

The dusky night-jar ; and when evening falls,
The countrymen will scarce go near its walls.

The Legend.

Sir Rupert was the bravest knight which olden times
Have e'er brought forth ; and on his records bore
The memories of great deeds, of doughty tourna-
ments,
Of mighty battles ; and of better things, forsooth,
Which often blush unseen, but which the Almighty eye,
Doth treasure ; and which do not fade, although
The world will pass them with a scornful mien.
Such as the timely help to those in need,
The hand extended to the starving poor,
The kindly heart, the gifts of boundless sympathy,
And all those arts of grace which some men have,
Nor think it vain to use them in their sphere.
In this fair vale he lived, where the tall pines

Did compass in his castle, and where great red deer
Would browse in all the pastures without fear,
And birds did sing in all the leafy groves,
Whilst the bright river wandered on below,
Still on, in ceaseless flowing to the sea.
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Which man could want : peace from the outer world,
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And made him wonder, 'Can this be the heart
Which I have longed for all this weary time ?'
Straightway, in flights of idle Fancy flew

His thoughts, thro' realms where fancy has her sway,
And passing quickly o'er his sight there came
The fateful horoscope of future years.
Then, waking to a sense of what was due
To this poor wayfarer, from saddle he
Dismounted quickly, and the maid placed there,
Wrapped in his own warm cloak ; and so they went.
Keen was the northern wind ; he heeded not,
Nor scarcely felt the swiftly spreading snow—
Only he saw it fall on sweetest face
Which e'er had looked at him ; and still they went.
Down the long vistas of the waving pines,
Where starving squirrels peeped at them amazed,
Past pools whose waters long had lain enchained
In icy Winter's grasp, where birds lay dead,
Or feebly flew from the strange cavalcade.
Then did Sir Rupert blow a mighty blast,
Which wakened echoes from the forest round,

And to his side brought his retainers there.
Gently they led the maid thro' court and hall
Where the great hounds came up to her
As if in sympathy, but strangely turned
And held aloof. Round her the women pressed,
And spoke in whispers of that beauteous face
So pale and death-like ; while her loosened hair
Fell in most glorious clusters on her breast
And shoulders, and e'en seemed to reach
Her very waist, such wondrous length was there.
Yet was there one in all that pitying throng
On whom her beauty came not with that charm
Which all the rest had felt. An agèd crone—
One who had well-nigh reached the end
Of her long life—an old retainer she,
Marked with the furrowing hands of Time and work :
She gazing on the maid had started back,
And stood there muttering, with her bony hand

Uplifted as amazed, and struck with fear,
Until Sir Rupert came, and gently asked
Where all her ancient courtesy had flown ;
Then moved her lips as if in speech, but yet
She uttered not, and straightway left the room.
He marvelled at her manner, and then feared
To see his dogs slink noiselessly with her
From out that chamber, where the lithe pale form
Lay as tho' Death had claimed her for his own ;
And thought that it was even so, and he
Had brought her to his castle but to die.
But with the bright returning light of day,
When the great orb of heaven was rising high,
Shining on snow-clad landscape, came the life,
And gently seemed to call the maiden back.
And so she dwelt, and lingered there for months,
Seeming to reck not of a former home ;
Whilst the snow left the world, and budding Spring

Took all the forest in its joyous arms,
As if to say, 'Forget the dreadful past—
The howling tempest with its rude alarms—
And only trust in me. See what I bring.'
Then came fair Summer following in its train, [down
When nights were short, and glorious moons looked
Through thickest trees; and all was cool and still,
Whilst trickled gently the once frozen rill.
She dwelt there with them, but her ways were strange;
Scarce spake she even to the gracious lord
Who from that dreadful storm had rescued her,
And who now loved her with a mighty love,
Seeking that she his beauteous bride should be,
Until he wondered sorely; but yet thought
That he did please her not, and strove yet more
To gain her heart. And so thro' seasons' change
Her beauty grew apace, till all men said
They ne'er had seen so beautiful a maid.

So passed the months, and once more Winter's hand
Bound the fair country with its iron grasp—
Yet was it not like what had been before—
And quickly fled. And when the springtime came
The maid relented, and Sir Rupert's heart
Was full of joy, and vied in happiness
With the fair mating birds within the trees.
Then did they wander in the fresh-leaved woods,
To pluck the wild flowers from some mossy bank,
By meadows where the hornèd cattle stood
And looked at them with eyes of wonderment ;
Down by the river where the bare-legged boys
Sailed countless fleets upon its flowing tide,
And where the fish would leap quite high in air,
To feed them with the insects hovering there.
Yet still the maid was silent, dark and sad,
And all along the hounds still left her path,
Although the master's voice bade them draw nigh,

And round the castle loudly howled at night,
Until the serving-people, filled with timorous fright,
Would scarce remain within its frowning walls.
And things of evil omen grew apace—
The screech-owls round the highest towers flew
When all was dark, and ravens croaked,
And in the midnight hour the cock did crow,
Whilst when the new moon shone, she showed
The old moon cradled in her brilliant arms.
Sir Rupert heeded not, for wondrous love
Had filled his heart for the strange beauteous maid,
Like those of ancient times who deeply drank
Of the weird waters of the Evil Stream,
And never thought again of what their fate
Had led them to ; but onward pressed,
Like some mad steed who dashing' o'er the plain
Sees the grim precipice before him stretch,
Yet checks not in his fearful flight, until

Too late. Or, like the fable of the Lotos fruit,
Which if a man do taste, straightway forgets
All that has passed. So the retainers came,
And fitted sumptuous chambers for the bride;
With tapestry they hung the oaken rooms,
And gorgeous rarities from Eastern climes—
Nought was there that could be too good for her—
Yet beamed there still that strange look in her face
Which seemed to take from her her wonted grace.—
As on the bridal eve Sir Rupert paced his hall,
All gay with preparations for the feast,
The agèd crone stood by him as he turned,
And, making low obeisance to her liege, did crave
That she might speak with him. So, having leave,
She thus spake out unto that master dear,
Whom she had served with zeal full many a year :
' Sir Rupert, I do pray thee have a care
In what thou dost regarding this fair maid ;

For if thou wed, know this, thy luck must pass
From thee. Reck you not what she is ?
This wondrous beauty whom thy timely aid
Saved from the storm, she is not of thy kind ;
And by the Heaven above, which hears me swear,
She is an *Elfin maid*—of such beware !
Then was Sir Rupert wroth, and answer gave,
That ere the morrow's sun had set beneath
The sougning pine-trees, he would wed his love.
And other words of anger spoke he then,
Which in his heart he fain would have recalled.
Then bowed the agèd woman wearily, and passed
From the vast hall, nor was she seen again.—
Upon that bridal night, when all was still,
And hushed were all the feastings of the day,
A charcoal-burner in the thickest woods
Looked wonderingly towards the east, and thought
To see the sun rise earlier than his wont ;

Then, with a startled look upon his face,
Rushed as tho' seized with horror from the place,
And speeding on, ne'er stopped until he came
To where the castle was one seething flame
Of fire ; and the dreaded cry rang out,
And round and over all the country-side,
And men and women, aye, and children too,
Came hastening to the evil-fated place,
But all too late ; and when the morning dawned,
Only the ruins stood. And the dear lord
Was found untouched by flame, but cold in death.
Yet, strange to say, no trace was ever seen
Of his fair bride. So has this story been
For ages grafted in the rural mind, and yet
They seem to hear the Elfin maiden call,
Among the forest trees when night doth fall.
Here stand the ruins, let us breathe a prayer
For the good souls of those who perished there.

GENERAL GORDON.



*H*USH! while the death-bell rings across the
land,

Hush ! while in humble solemn mood we stand,
To mourn the fatal death of one who fell
Beneath a traitor's blade, when all seemed well ;
One Englishman who midst a savage race
Went forth, scorning rank, pride of place,
And all the charms of homely peace and life,
To do his duty in the bloody strife.

Gordon ! thy name will dwell on every lip,
To thy proud ensign will all standards dip,
Until this very earth and sky and sea
Have passed away into the great 'to be.'

Gordon ! though rests thy form in unknown lands,
Amongst the desert of great Egypt's sands,
Still dost thou seem with us ; no chains control
The dauntless courage of thy unslain soul.
Yet mourn we sorely that in time too late
The gallant band of rescue neared the gate
Of that grim city midst the arid plain,
Where thou hadst looked for it so long in vain.
Gordon is dead ! Hush ! while the death-bell rings—
So passes life, so passeth life's best things.
Gordon is dead ! hundreds do bless thy name
And never in this land will fade thy fame.
All thro' that sad and weary time of gloom,
When thou didst battle in the far Khartoum,
What must have been thy thoughts of those afar,
Who left thee helpless in a hopeless war ?
Brave spirit ! now thy form is stiff and cold ;
Powerless the mighty arm, erstwhile so bold ;

Dimmed is the lustre of thy searching eye ;
Thou hast gone forth to duty, and to die.
Yet death was nothing to a mind like thine,
Which saw in everything the Fate Divine ;
Thou oftentimes before had faced its power,
Thou hadst no terror in its mystic hour.
Let scoffers laugh ; there is a power in this
Which men not of thy mould do surely miss.
There is no name of Englishman will shine,
In after ages, with such light as thine ;
There is no deed, 'neath the Creator's sun,
Can equal that which thou hast nobly done.
Thou midst the stormy tempest of the world,
A spotless banner ever kept unfurled ;
Thou 'twas who, midst the very fiercest strife,
Preserved the earliest tenets of thy life ;
True, loving, generous, a faithful friend,
So thou remained unto the bitter end.

Would that the hearts which now thy loss do mourn,
Thy countrymen, and dearest friends forlorn,
Had seen thy gallant form return once more,
A glorious victor, to thy native shore !
Yet victor art thou, friend of the oppressed,
Of England's heroes wisest and the best.—
Forth to the battle goes the modern knight,
Skilled in war's arts, with every craft bedight ;
The trumpets sound, and men his voice obey ;
But thou hast scornèd such a vast array.
Great was thy heart—in it was put thy trust ;
To conquer by the means thou heldst were just.
Men from far-distant lands have owned thy grace,
Children have loved thee for thy kindly face ;
Thy wondrous faith hath many a lesson taught,
And good things out of evil oft hath brought.
In the far East, and in thy native land,
Thy deeds of goodness gloriously do stand,

Clear midst a world which in its darkest days
Would seem illumined by thy life's bright rays.
Hail to thee ! chieftain of the eagle eye ;
Hail to thee ! leader, fearing not to die.
A nation mourns, and spreading o'er the earth,
Its mourning gives to brighter feelings birth.
We see thee, Gordon ! once thus basely slain,
Endowed with all thy richest powers again ;
We see Hope standing by thy valiant side ;
We see Faith waiting, fit to be thy bride ;
And over all, and round, the blessed Love
Which went before thy footsteps from above.
Thus may we stand beside great Gordon's tomb,
Though he be buried in grim Egypt's womb ;
May his fair name be honoured evermore,
And memory waft it on from shore to shore.
Hush ! while the tidings pass across the land ;
Hush ! while in contemplation sad we stand ;

Gordon is dead ! list while the death-bell rings—
So passes life, so passeth life's best things.
Ope wide thy portals, shades of noble dead !
A form as great as any now doth tread
Your outer gates ; look ye, and heed its fame,
And all your honour pay great Gordon's name.

A LOVE SONG.



*M*ORN is now breaking, and all nature
waking,

Waits for the light of thine eyes, my love ;
At thy lattice kneeling, a little glance stealing,
You gaze on the earth and the skies above.
Then list to my song, for Love bids thee not stay ;
Beloved, come forth ; let us wander away.

The flowers unfolding, dew's no longer holding,
Wait for the sound of thy voice, my love ;
A rival they know of, now peeps at the sunrise,
'Tis well they endeavour their sweetness to
prove.

Then, in the hot noontide, rest here in the shadows,

Thy lover shall guard thee, and harm from thee
keep ;

And when night o'er thy vision is once again stealing,

Will join with the angels in watching thy sleep.

Then list to my song ; let us wander away.

Beloved, come forth ; for Love bids thee not stay.

SHIPWRECKED.



A SUMMER eve, a setting sun,
A cottage with an open door ;
A fisherman, whose work is done,
Nearing his home beside the shore.
A loving heart, a trustful eye,
Mother and wife she sees him come,
His form so clear against the sky,
Waving a welcome to his home.
A winter's night, a mighty storm,
A barque in peril on the main ;
A loving heart, so soon forlorn,
Which prays for its return in vain.

A summer eve, a setting sun,
A cottage with a fast-closed door ;
A fisherman, whose work is done,
Laid to his rest beside the shore.

IN THE WOODS.



*T*HERE is a breathless silence in the air,
A sort of spell which holds all nature still,
Whilst amidst skies of wondrous colouring,
The sun is setting fast 'neath yonder hill ;
Thus yet another day of life, of earth,
Fades into that strange hour that tells decline,
As once again I wander in thy paths
So softly carpeted, sweet groves of pine.
Who can but feel the ever-hallowed charm
Of these weird woods in which no footsteps sound,
And all the noise of day is gently hushed,
While the sweet scents of trees are wafted round ;

Within these aisles the song-birds' notes are
hushed,

But faintly comes the murmur of the sea,
And ever and anon I hear the hum

Of some late-wandering, returning bee.

Across my path there falls no ray of sun ;

The bare stems rise, crowned with e'erlasting
shade;

I wander on and on, and muse—ah me!—

On things of earth, which in far ages fade,
When we have passed from all our earthly scenes

Into the boundless future of our race :

When sunsets are no more, and human life

Is merged in death or everlasting grace.

But let me wake, let me but linger now,

And gather peaceful thoughts in hope divine,
As once again I pass adown thy paths

At mystic eventide, sweet groves of pine.

Here let me leave all troubles which perplex,
As grows apace the soothing shades of night,
Assured that on me, as on thee, O woods !
Will rise the blessedness of morning light.

AT NEWARK ABBEY.

ON THE RIVER WEY.



*S*TILL is the night : the moonlight falls
Across my path with silver rays ;
I stand within the ruined walls,
Once sainted spot of ancient days.
The river wanders on below,
Down to the lock—a deep dark place—
While evening breezes softly blow
Cool and refreshing o'er my face.
From yonder green and leafy wood,
'Neath which the waters glide along,
The bird of night, in joyous mood,
Floods all the valley with its song.

The thoughts of ages long since fled
Seem brought before my wondering eyes ;
I see strange visions of the dead,
While clouds of incense dimly rise.

I see the white-robed choir pass,
And hear the aged prelate pray
For souls of saints, in solemn mass,
For guidance through another day.

Then as a cloud comes o'er my sight,
I pass from out the ruined door
Into the moonlit summer scene,
Back to the things of earth once more.

How soon, I thought, the hand of Time
Forces man's work to own its sway !
Nought stands but that which is Divine ;
E'en temples such as these decay.

'Twas winter when I passed again,

Months after, when the leaves were shed ;

The valley then was dark with rain,

The nightingales had long since fled.

THE DROUGHT.



T WAS summer's brightest noon. The hot
parched earth

Had lain for weeks dry as the desert sands
Whereon the nomad Arab and the camel dwell ;
The springs were failing, and the leaves of trees,
And plants, and saplings withered 'neath the sun,
Which seemed to burn and glow amidst the heavens.
The very birds were listless, and their songs
Were hushed, or faintly heard at even,
When the cool western breeze came softly up
And tried to whisper hope to all around.
Amongst the fields the cattle stood, and seemed
To look with anguish on the falling streams,

Whilst the sweet scent of well-dried hay
Pervaded hall and cottage ; and the farmers' men
Were forced to let the heated noontide pass
Ere they could work—save here and there
A stalwart one who, scorning sun and heat,
Would ply his scythe or fork, in spite of all.
Then Night would fall, but her sweet dew withheld,
Until the anguish of the earth was great, and men
Quite sombre grew, and daily scanned the heavens
For signs which haply might foretell the rain.
But still it came not, and the days passed on,
And the great blazing sun was still undimmed,
And ran its hourly course without a cloud.
Then did men pass each other with a look
Which told of anxious care, and e'en the children
Learned the dreaded name of Drought.
Then did they pray, the rich man and the poor,
That the Almighty Spirit would not leave

Them thus to die ; and many joined in prayer
Who scarce had thought on such a thing before.
Such is the weakness of the boasted Man.
See how the spirit fails in time of need,
And seems to yearn and cling to something more
Than man himself can be. And yet fools say
That man is all in all. Well, let them say.
The drought still held, save that a few big drops
Had fallen gently from a passing cloud,
And men had run to call the farmers out
At dead of night, exclaiming, ' Lo, the rain !'
But still it came not, and their spirits fell,
Like leaves in autumn dropping silently
From their dear homes, which they seem loth to lose.
So lay the land for weeks ; they almost grew
To think that Drought a lasting demon was,
To walk the earth unto the great eternity,
Until one evening, when the sun had set,

They raised a shout, and pointed to the west,
Where rising slowly, but with certain course,
Lay great black banks of clouds ; and then
In farmyard, courtyard, or in garden trim,
The pea-fowls screeched, and crickets chirruped,
While the great brown bats flew noiselessly about
The parchèd meadows. Then the farmer spake,
'Into your homes, my men, and thank the Lord,
For the rain surely comes.' And so it was ;
The rumbling thunder even now they heard,
While up, still up, came on that long black bank
Of cloud, and spreading o'er the sky
Closed round, making the night come on,
That night which was to bring the earth relief.
Now flashed the light from out the sable cloud,
And heaven's artillery sounded far and near.
The western wind came hurrying up apace,
And made the trees to bow, and all did hearken,

For the sound was nigh of precious drops of rain.
Yet greatly feared they that the storm would pass;
But as they doubted, lo, a mighty sound
As of the ceaseless rushing of some waterfall
They heard afar, then spreading o'er the plain,
Came sweeping over all the blessed rain.
The horses neighed, and lifting up their heads
Hailed with delight the long-forgotten sound,
Whilst in the thickest corners of the trees
Nestled the birds. Down the dry sun-burnt hill,
Where grass had turned almost to decay,
Fell floods of water, and the earth looked up
And seemed as though it blessed the hurrying clouds
Yet still it rained ; and rushing on their course
The brooklets foamed, and gushed among the stones,
Down to the turbid river, where the stream
Grew stronger ; and then men did come
Into the blinding storm, and some did cry

For very joy to see the rain once more.
So was the earth relieved, and Drought
Passed from the land; but still the tale has stood,
Unto these later days, how great was then the flood.

A SONG.



*R*IVER ! let me watch thy stream,
And see the sun, with glorious sheen,
Glint on thy waters as they flow
Beside the willows bending low.

I hear the murmur of the mill,
With ceaseless clamour, never still;
And see the country children stand
To watch its wonders hand-in-hand.

I hear the joyous songbird sing,
See kingfisher on glorious wing,
The barges idly floating by,
The changing of an autumn sky.

And by the lock I sit and wait
To see it ope its frowning gate,
To let the merry boatfull pass,
With sturdy swain and laughing lass.

Here is the place where you and I
Once saw two leaves float idly by;
And now we're parted e'en as they—
Ah me ! since many a weary day.

But there is yet a time, dear heart,
When hands will join, no more to part,
Tho' lives do pass in currents fleet ;
Leaves in the eddies sometimes meet.

WRECKAGE ON THE COAST.



W HENCE art thou come, grim token from
the sea ?

And what the history thou couldst tell to me ?
Art thou from countries near, or lands afar ?
Wert thou the part of some huge ship of war,
Which bravely rode the waves, yet powerless fell
In thousand pieces 'neath the Storm King's spell ?
Or didst thou form the craft of fishermen
Whose wives and bairns do seek for them in vain,
Who to their trade did joyful sail from shore,
To come again to earthly ports no more ?
What is thy history ? Did the trip of feet
E'er sound on thee, as on some steamer fleet

Which nears the land at close of summer day,
And some perchance do dance, while others pray ?
Here on this bleak lone shore thou liest now,
Broken and spurned by that which did allow
Thee once to sail in triumph o'er the main ;
Ne'er wilt thou brave this rocky coast again.

BARBARA.



*C*OME, years long flown—come, memories of the
past,

And help me with these visions fading fast,
That I may tell a tale of noble love,
And Barbara's merits as true woman prove.
In this too mundane age we oft o'erlook
The simple floweret in some rustic nook,
And coldly pass its lovely fragrance by,
Extolling rarer brethren to the sky.
Such is but nature ; yet it seems to me
That such a thing as this ought not to be.
When down the valley of our lives we tread,
To find some spot to rest the weary head,

We seek not places where exotics grow,
But rather those where common wild flowers show,
Which we remembered through the time of strife
Bestrewed our pathways in young years of life.
These welcome us, and make the journey bright,
While shedding perfume in Life's darkest night.
Come, then, O reader, with me, hand-in-hand
Unto our Cornish coast—the flower-land,
Where the wild bee doth hover o'er the bowers,
And myrtles clamber on the ruined towers ;
Where Nature opes her book to mortal sight
To give her willing students pure delight,
And beauteous earth and sky, and bluest sea,
Seem mingled in the fairest brilliancy.
Here, in a village hidden by the wood,
A cottage covered o'er with creepers stood,
And here lived Barbara. Here had she been,
Beloved for years, of every heart the queen ;

Knowing but little of the world's alarms
While ripened daily all her maiden charms.
Ah, 'twas a pleasant spot ! A little rill
Ran gently to the shore from off the hill,
Down to the sea, which oft with mighty shocks
Would break in surging fury on the rocks.
Here the invader's hand had never come,
To change the aspect of their beauteous home ;
No engine on its iron roadway ran,
To bring them nearer to the haunts of man.
All here was peace ; no rude alarms awoke
The slumbering stillness of the simple folk,
Save when the angry winter storm did beat,
And cast some shipwrecked body at their feet ;
Or when some aged neighbour joined the blest,
And by the white-haired priest was laid to rest.
Here played the children on the grassy slopes,
And recked not of their future fears or hopes ;

And midst the orchards in the fair springtime
The very ground with purest white did shine,
With blossoms from the trees, which later still
With russet apples would their garners fill.
If but the sojourning in towns could cease,
We sure must find our human sins decrease ;
Compare the face of those who till the soil
With those who midst the cities' streets do toil.
Amongst the smoke, half hidden from the light,
The city workers slave by day and night,
Without one hope to cheer them in the strife—
What wonder that some live a death in life !
But in such scenes as these, where skies are clear,
The earth unto the heaven seems more near.
In this sweet village, then, our Barbara dwelt,
And all its soul-absorbing influence felt ;
She loved the very ground on which she trod—
The pathway leading to the house of God,

Where the great boughs of oak did interlace,
Forming at hottest noon a sheltered place ;
The children tottering on their tiny feet ;
The lambs which in the verdant fields did bleat—
All these she loved, yet of love had no thought,
Which in these days most maids seem early taught.
So passed her life—she had no worldly care,
No mist or darkling cloud, no cross to bear.
But as 'tis fated that we must have pain,
As surely as the summer has its rain,
As sure as that from out the cloudless sky
The storm will burst upon us by-and-by,
To strengthen us, and make each bear his part,
So love brought sorrow to our Barbara's heart.
O sweetest passion of the human soul,
Extolled by man as in the flowing bowl
He drinks to thee, nor little heeds thy power,
For good or evil in thy victory's hour ;

Thine is the kingdom when all kingdoms fade,
Will triumph in the greater love arrayed.
Once in the golden woods, when autumn fell,
An artist saw the maid ; he knew full well
Her rare and wondrous charm of face and form,
And begged of her to leave him not forlorn
To work his craft, and only asked that she
His beauteous model would consent to be.
So midst the fading woods he sketched her there,
With sun-rays glinting on her beauteous hair,
While the wood stream came rippling through the glade
Close to her feet, and sweetest music made.
And so it chanced, that in that busy town
Which she had heard of, but had never known,
Men praised her picture, and e'en women said
The face was worthy one more highly bred.
The artist went with autumn leaves away,
But promised he would come again one day,

When the sweet summer shone again on earth,
And Nature to her joyous mood gave birth.
Then winter came, and fell on Barbara's heart—
She only knew then what it was to part—
She loved full well, and thus began to prove
The strength and power of her youthful love.
And as bright places darkest ones become
When the frail god forsakes his hallowed home,
When hearths are bare, and all is black and drear,
Which once were bright when those we loved were near,
So cared she less for all her well-known ways,
And heaven seemed clouded with the wintry haze.
Thus did she pine for months, till he returned ;
But then the love-flame once more in her burned.
He owned his love, he was her knight of old,
And in his sweet caress he proudly told
How much he longed to take her to the town,
To be his own, and hear her great renown.

Ah ! then flew swiftly by her life's bright day,
Chasing the gloom of winter quite away ;
Once more they rambled over hill and moor,
Once more they watched the waves break on the shore,
And made their plans for happy hours to come,
When Barbara should grace the new-made home.
How often 'tis when mortal life seems clear,
The gathering of the storm-cloud is most near ;
'Tis well for us that we can never see
The awful horoscope of things to be.
A pestilence, which came by sea and land,
Struck down her lover with its ruthless hand ;
For days she nursed him with all tenderness,
And in her heart of hearts prayed God to bless.
Ah me ! those days will long remembered be,
When Death hung o'er that village by the sea,
When youth and age, and e'en the strong and hale,
Were laid to rest within that fated vale ;

And many fled from out the plague-struck place,
Yet Barbara laboured in her work of grace
Until the danger passed, and him she loved,
Her sweet devoted skill had amply proved.
But when the autumn once more touched the land,
Came the Great Reaper, took her by the hand,
With gentle touch which she could scarcely feel,
For she was weakened by her noble zeal,
And bore her loving soul with him in flight,
Unto its truest home midst realms of light.
And so lived Barbara, so she passed away ;
And on that Western shore unto this day,
They tell the story of her, near and far—
The saddened love of beauteous Barbara.

ONWARDS.



*D*OWN from the hills,

All fringed with gorse,
Comes the tumbling stream
In winding course,
Through wood and valley,
By meadows green,
Where trippeth nightly
The elfin queen,
And leaveth her mark
On the fair hillside,
For the lads and lasses
At summer-tide.
Past many a farm
Where the lazy kine

Do lie in its pools
 When the sun doth shine ;
Then leaps the trout
 From its stony bed,
Where great tree-branches
 Do arch o'erhead ;
But steadying now
 To a sober mind,
Leaves hill and vale
 And their joys behind,
As it broadens out
 By the old grey mill,
And floweth over
 Its great black wheel ;
To join the river,
 To reach the sea,
And pass like man
 To obscurity.

THE WRECK.



*D*OST thou hear the sigh of the rising
gale,

As it sweeps from the mighty deep ?
Bringing the great waves rolling in,
Round the rocky coast to leap ;
And to scatter their curdling foam on land,
As their angry crests ride high,
And uplift a tale of its wondrous might,
From ocean to stormy sky ?
There is danger to-night upon the main,
There is anguish in many a home,
For the fisherman's barque that is afloat,
Far out on the deep alone.

Hark ! how the storm increases now !

 List to its dull deep roar,

As the maddened waves are rolling in

 To break on the rocky shore.

See how the lightning, wildly bright,

 Glares over the troubled scene,

And all is tempest-tost which once

 So calm and still has been.

I have seen the row-boats dot the bay

 Like toys on an inland lake,

I have heard the laughter of merry crews

 The cavern's echoes wake ;

But now the God of Storm is here,

 While thickest clouds do lower :

Heaven help thee, little fishing craft,

 That comes within its power !

Hush ! for I hear a wild weird sound ;

 Is it sea-bird's startled shriek,

As it leaves some stormy quarters,

Fresh resting-place to seek ?

Is it the sigh of the gathering gale,

As it takes its strength anew ?

Or is it the last despairing cry

Of some brave and helpless crew ?

Ah ! 'tis so ! see the lightning's flash

Shows out upon the main,

And a little barque is struggling

Which will ne'er reach port again.

Alas for the women's wailing !

Alas for the children's cry,

And the craft which went gaily sailing

From land in a cloudless sky !

May the God of all the raging storms

Stay now His mighty hand,

That brave and stalwart English hearts

May save that struggling band !

* * * * *

The task is vain—His will be done—

The struggle is past and o'er,

And a gallant crew has joined the rest

Who sleep by the rocky shore.

There is anguish in many hearts,

There is wailing o'er the main,

For the fisherman's barque which carried those

Who will never return again ;

And the waves roll on in triumph,

Or hiss in their angry joys,

For the heart of the fisher who is lost,

And the lives of the fisher-boys.

In the quiet morn the sun will shine

On the row-boats in the bay,

And the dreaded name of storm and wreck

Will pass like a mist away.

Only the wife remembers,
Or the mothers' hearts do tell,
Of that little barque in the howling wind,
And the strength of the Storm King's spell.

AT REST.



*S*HE was the fairest ! in her sweet pure face

We saw the sainted spirit daily grow ;
'Twas born not of this earth, for heaven's grace
Was in our darling while with us below.

She was the wisest ! though the hand of Time
Had lain but lightly on her lovèd brow,
The youth's rash hopes beneath her did decline,
While aged men her judgment would allow.

She was the dearest ! both to rich and poor
Her face came like the sunny rays of morn,
Breaking thro' storm, or thro' the closèd door,
Like clouds of eastern glory at the dawn.

She is the happiest! for she lies at rest

In yonder churchyard by the gorse-clad hill,
Her form beneath the flowers she loved the best,
Her spirit subject to her Father's will.

LINGERING SHADOWS.



*T*HERE are shades of night on the river,

There are mists upon the sea,
And the gathering hosts of the darkness
Are passing 'twixt me and thee ;
Yet I still can see the sunlight
On river and trees and all,
And its lingering shades are falling,
To break through the night's black pall.

O Love of the ever golden past,
Come back in this hallowed shade,
Come back, and retrace thy little steps,
Thou winsome and wand'ring maid !

We look on the same fair moon,
For us both lie the shadows there ;
And I seem to see your merry face,
And the glint of your auburn hair.

Ah, lingering shades of the daylight,
How dear is their wondrous balm,
When they come on troubled spirits
With the breath of the evening's calm !
When all birds to roost are turning,
And the gloaming is on the sea,
And the light of day low burning,
Then, my Love, I will dream of thee.

‘ I must be sad when I have cause, and laugh when I am merry.’—*Much Ado about Nothing*.

PHILOSOPHY.



S*HE* is standing in the woodland glade ;
Across her face flits sun and shade ;
In fact a truly winsome maid
Is Edith.

Wild flowers she in her hair doth twine—
Ah me ! they truly look divine ;
I'd give the world to call her mine,
Sweet Edith.

And yet, alack ! it cannot be ;
She hath a swain across the sea,
And looks disdainfully on me,
Does Edith.

Her laughing lips which seem to say,
' Kiss me for ever and a day,'
Are from me harshly turned away—
Ah, Edith !

Oh well, in many another glade
There waits for me *some* winsome maid ;
I think those flowers soon will fade
On Edith.

A CONVERSAZIONE.



*L*ADY BETTY is giving an evening party,
And in answer to invitations hearty,
Come lords and ladies, and damsels fair,
In dresses of 'Worth,' and wondrous hair,
With subtle touches of art divine,
Making fifty-three look like twenty-nine.
There is Countess Gray, whose age is set
At a very high figure by bad Debrett ;
And Parson Lowe, with his flowing coat ;
With Parson Highe, on whom ladies doat ;
And Solicitor Jones, who is making up
To Lord Tomnoddy, a sad young pup.

Then all is hushed for the Signor Pritti,
Who warbles a very insipid ditty
About his love and a cruel fate,
And the things which always come too late.
Tea or ices are handed round,
And for once is heard the welcome sound
Of some hearty unaffected laugh,
Or perhaps the slightest attempt at chaff,
As young Tomnoddy upsets the scones
Right into the lap of the stout Miss Jones.
Now Lady Betty looks much relieved,
For her hour is come to be reprieved ;
And out of fifty are forty-four
Who vote her party an awful bore.

‘*AFTER LONG YEARS.*’



I *WANDERED* by the river
With a maiden fair and sweet ;
Yet well I knew that surely crept
The damp into my feet.

We climbed unto the hill-top,
To find a breezy spot ;
I wished the hill was somewhere else,
It made me——well ! too hot.

We sat in shady valley,
Whilst I her love did beg ;
Only I knew that sixteen ants
Were romping up my leg.

We married in the bygone days,
I and my stately queen ;
And times have somehow changed, and I
Wish that it ne'er had been.

For I see the flowing river,
And note the breezy hills;
But dark are all the valleys
In the shade of countless bills.

REFLECTIONS.

(BY THE MAIDEN AUNT.)



So Sir William has actually left you—

He was not in earnest, you see ;

Gone in fact, unawares,

And that passionate look,

And that kiss in the nook,

Were but snares.

No doubt, dear, he gave you great promise,

Of the future, of love, and all that—

'Tis the way when they woo ;

But, Miss Lina, remember

That May and December

Hardly do.

Then dry up those sweet eyes of hazel,
And off to your tennis begone—

 You must learn to forget :
 Just think now, I pray,
 What the Joneses will say
 If you fret.

Just take a look round (when you've time),
See the way in which all things go on—
 'Tis the same.

Delusion's the word of the day,
And people, to make the thing pay,
 Play a game.

He said that his rent-roll was large ;
But I doubt if the things which he mentioned
 Were there.

Some people seem not to have fears
Of leaving fine castles for years,
Up in 'Ayr.'

No doubt but he called you his darling,
And hinted, perchance, that he'd love
Evermore ;
But I guess, if his 'amours' are reckoned,
You would come in a good forty-second—
Not before.

You say I'm a bitter old maid,
And things have gone wrong with my heart—
It may be ;
And I see the disdain on your lip,
As you stand there and hurriedly sip
Hot 'Bohea.'

But I think, in a few years to come,
You will find that my judgment is true,
And quite right ;
On every plant comes there *some* frost,
And the good fruit is annually lost
With the blight.

Then dry up those sweet eyes of hazel,
And off to your tennis begone,
After tea.
And away with that obstinate pout ;
There are good fish as ever came out,
In the sea.

'HERE IN COOL GROT.'



I'M the king of a charming grot,
Wherein oft I've strolled on hottest day,
A perfect shaded, lovely spot,
Where rare exotics round me lay ;
And where the perfumes of the rose
Are blended with the violets sweet,
And where the beauteous palm-tree grows,
While mosses circle round one's feet.
The deft and busy country girl
With subtle hands the nosegay plies ;
'Tis sweet to fly from city's whirl
And on these visions feast one's eyes.

Strolling I pass, and enter thee—

O beauteous grotto, let me stay,

In peace and contemplation be,

Amongst thy pleasures all the day!

There's joy in this thy cool retreat,

I feel a sort of Enoch Arden;

Until a tray dropped on my feet

Reminds me I'm in Covent Garden.

MURIEL.



*M*URIEL'S figure is fair to view,
As she stands in shadow beneath the yew ;
I envy the kitten she's nursing there,
As she presses it close to her auburn hair.

Muriel's pretty, and I am plain—
This is my sorrow, and that her gain ;
And she is tall, while I am not—
Such is her fortune, and such my lot.

I venture a word 'neath the old yew-tree,
She looks so sweet as she answers me
And tells me it's settled—she's going to wed
That horrible fellow, her cousin Fred.

Ten Years After.

Muriel sits on the garden-seat,
And her temper is very far from sweet,
For she has married, while I have not—
Such is my fortune, and such her lot.

IN MEMORIAM.

(THE WET SEASON.)



*T*HE hunter rides forth
In the smiling morn,
But returns in the evening
Wet through and forlorn.
Sing ho ! for the English weather.

'Tis a pleasure to boat,
And your picnic begin ;
But before it is over,
Get wet to the skin.
Sing ho ! for the English weather.

'Tis glorious to walk
When the glass is 'up high,'
And there is not a cloud
In the midsummer sky.]
Sing ho ! for the English weather.

But 'tis sad to come back,
And a friend to have met,
Who has cheerily said
That he thinks you are wet.
Sing ho ! for the English weather.

And drenched you go in,
And to mark your return,
With a cold in the head,
You your weather-glass burn.
Sing ho ! for the English weather.

When you go to the sea

You go out for a sail,

But before you get in

It is blowing a gale.

Sing ho ! for the English weather.

I'll ne'er reckon again,

Fine weather, on thee,

For ' prophets ' have put us all

Quite up a tree.

Sing ho ! for the English weather.

But I'll wear an old hat,

And if e'er I go boating,

Will order a cartload

Of waterproof coating.

Sing ho ! for the English weather.

A LITTLE MISTAKE.



ONE autumn night, the coast-train brought,
Into a well-known London station,
A sun-burnt man who found himself
The centre of much admiration.

The thronging crowds around him pressed,
And cheered him as he raised his hand ;
They told him thousands more were there,
Extending half-way down the Strand.

At length a hearing he obtained—
They, breathless, hung on every word—
'I think,' he said, 'there's some mistake ;
It seems to me the thing's absurd.

‘ If you will list, I’ll tell you why,
And lots of other things beside ;
Please understand my name is Brown,
I’ve come from three weeks’ stay at Ryde.’

BY THE SEA.



*T*HE summer sun is glowing,
While the gentle breeze is blowing,
And the lazy river flowing
From the town unto the sea,
So are we.

The painter packs his easels,
And forgets the children's measles ;
Little recks he of reprisals
From the landlords by the sea,
Wretched he.

And the mother thinks with horror
Of the baleful black to-morrow,
When she goes from home with sorrow
From the town unto the sea,

With the key.

But when there they all are happy,
Though papa is often snappy,
And domestic bliss is 'frappé'
By the landlady's 'wee drappie,'

After tea.

At length to town returning,
When spent is every earning,
They often think with yearning
Of the sojourn by the sea—

So do we.

UNANSWERED.



A *TRAVELLER* in foreign climes,
With Indian suns made brown,
Found out his way, not long ago,
Once more to London town.

Old Time had travelled since he trod
Its dear and muddy streets,
Yet he at far-famed London Bridge
An old acquaintance meets.

‘Tell me,’ he said, ‘my dearest friend,
One thing to ease my breast ;
I see *THREE* mustards advertised,
Which of them is the best ?’

His friend with confidence replies,
 ‘Come then, and you shall see ;
“Colman,” here, vows that he’s the one,
 So that the best *must* be.’

But turning, then, amazed he saw
 Emblazoned on the wall,
‘Keen’ said exactly the same thing,
 So his was best of all.

Musing on this, they passed away,
 But then astonished saw
The name of ‘Champion’ as the best
 Laid down as strict as law.

‘I think, dear friend,’ the traveller said,
 ‘This task will ne’er be done ;
Since here the *best* I cannot find,
 I’d *best* let all alone.’

‘*T I M*.’



*L*AME Cobbler Tom was a queer old man,
With his rickety legs and face like tan ;
And folks did say, as they often will,
He'd been fond of the bottle, and was so still.
Be that as it may, he did lots of work,
And never the smallest job would shirk ;
And tho' often seen at convivial suppers,
He never neglected his 'sole' or 'uppers.'
Tim was the name of his dog, and he
Was the ugliest cur you could wish to see ;
And all the thefts in the country round
Were laid to the credit of this poor hound.

He was black and tan—and black and blue
With old tin pots which people threw ;
But the only one he got no knocks from
Was his queer old master, Cobbler Tom.

The times were hard, and one winter's-tide
When the snow lay thick on the country-side,
The cobbler's soul had passed away
To wait for the Everlasting Day.
And the dog was lost, and no one cared
Whither he went, or how he fared ;
But when spring cleared snow from off the ground,
Tim's bones on his master's grave were found.

SECOND THOUGHTS.



*T*HY lips, O maid ! are like the rose,
Thine eyes like deepest lakes ;
And when thou passest o'er the sward,
It of thy grace partakes.

The daisies hardly feel thy tread,
But turn and smile at thee ;
I can but live, if I have hope
Thou'lt give thy heart to me.

Yet on reflection I will go
And live a lonely life ;
I find thou hast a tongue, dear maid,
As sharp as any knife.

OVER THE SEA.

(BY A LANDSMAN.)



OVER the sea ! when the waves are high,
And their foamy crests go riding by,
And there's wind in the sail, and more in the sky,
Then over the sea is no place for me.

Over the sea ! when the waves are low,
And your sailing-boat will hardly go,
And the swell is sure and long and slow,
Then over the sea is no place for me.

Over the sea ! in the stormy gale,
You may go in your vessels, with steam or sail ;
I prefer to wander by hill and dale,
For ' over the sea ' has no charms for me.

'LOOKING FORWARD.'



*A*LICE! with the downcast look,
As thou standest by the brook,
Think'st thou of the good plain cook,
That's to be ?

Dost thou see her, buxom—strapping !
At thy back-door loudly rapping,
Whilst the household are all napping,
After tea ?

Dost thou dream of toast untoasted,
Or of mutton hardly roasted,
Things undone, of which she boasted
Unto thee ?

In regions where seductive cats,
Obtained to catch the wily rats,
Instead do eat thy butter-pats,
She will be.

Cheer thee, Alice ! leave the brook,
Boldly take thy cooking-book,
Fire a broadside into cook
That's to be.

With 'Beeton' for thy constant guide,
No earthly harm *can* e'er betide ;
So ope its classic pages wide,
Read and see !

So thy cook, *so* plain and good,
When she is in the proper mood,
May really sometimes make good food,
Say— 'Kedgerie.'

Gracious, Alice ! you are slipping,
In the brook your dress is dipping ;
Not to cook will come that ' dripping,'
But to thee.

'A PICTURE.'



S^{*HE*} sat beneath the cottage-eaves,
And gazed on fields where golden sheaves
Of corn made fair the rural scene,
Where late the waving crop had been.

A storm had passed, and one big drop
Came from the thatch with horrid flop,
And trickling down her dainty nose,
Fell ruthlessly on Sunday clothes.

Then did she rise, and, turning round,
Stamped her sweet foot upon the ground;
But puddles, spirting o'er her stocking,
Caused her to leave, with words 'quite shocking.'

'WHAT MIGHT BE.'



O *MUFFIN MAN!* with well-stocked tray,
Who passes at the close of day

Adown our square,
Tell me the secret of that bell,
Thou ring'st with ever dreadful knell
In frosty air.

Why does the dustman only bellow,
And almost crack his lungs, poor fellow !

While thou dost ring ?
Thou crumpet-knight, with jaunty cap,
Who poureth treasures in cook's lap,
Solve me this thing.

Thou canst not ; then I'll tell you why,
At least to do so I must try—

I've got it now :
In quiet oven you do bake,
And think your ' calling ' doesn't make
Enough of row.

Ring on, then, in your ' muffin style,'
And dustman bellow, all the while
I read theology ;
If all the criers join with you,
We'll have a something almost new
In campanology.

THE JACKDAW.



*T*HE jackdaw flew from the Abbey tower,
To flutter his wings on high ;
And chattering came to the farthest point,
Where a comrade he did espy—
A bird so gay, in the fine array
Of feathers of golden hue.
' I wish,' said the jackdaw, ' Brother Vane,
That I were as smart as you.'

But the golden bird, he only turned
To the North his crested head ;
And the jackdaw knew, from his very look,
That his heart was made of lead ;

But still he felt that gold was good,
And thought ill of his plumage black ;
So, with many caws of discontent,
To the Abbey roof flew back.

He watched the crowd of people pass,
And noticed all they did ;
But he also saw that the kindest hearts,
By the shabbiest coats were hid.
And the jackdaw chattered to himself,
‘ Brother Vane ! you are only sham ;
For, from what I see of the world below,
I’d as soon be as I am.’

